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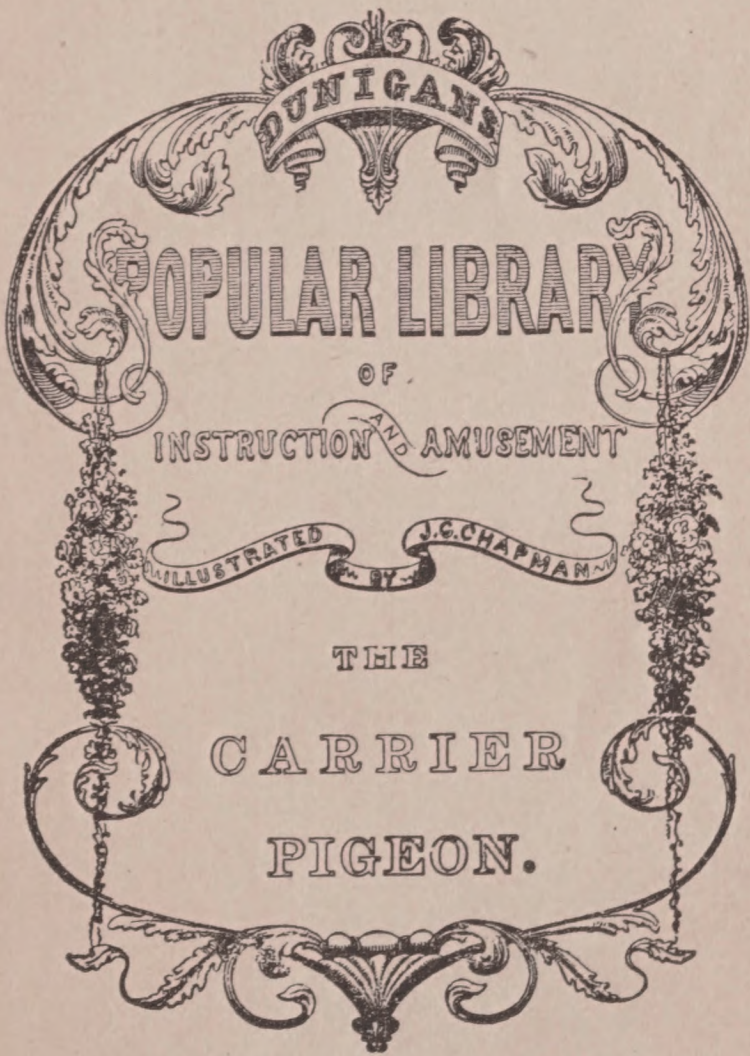
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THE
CARRIER
PIGEON.





"Late one evening, two pilgrims knock'd at the castle gate."—Page 27.



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ABOUT two centuries ago, there lived in the mountain hold of Falkenberg, the brave knight Theobald and his pious wife Ottilia. The knight was as good as he was brave. He took under his powerful protection all who had any injury to complain of, and never asked even thanks for his aid. To make others happy, he thought, was an ample reward. In Ottilia the poor had a

THE CARRIER-PIGEON

generous friend. She visited the sick in the neighboring valleys, and opened wide the gates of her castle to all who required and desired relief. Agnes, the only daughter of this virtuous pair, followed from her infancy the example of her parents. When only eight years old, her greatest pleasure was to make others happy. No wonder, then, that this good family was universally respected and beloved, and that no person ever caught a glimpse of the high towers of Falkenberg without a hearty blessing on the good people that dwelt within its walls. The blessing of heaven did visibly descend on Theobald, Ottilia, and Agnes. Their hands were ever open, yet they never knew want: they were as wealthy as any family in the land.

One fine summer's day, Ottilia and her daughter took a walk after dinner, in the

THE CARRIER-PIGEON

garden, which sloped down the side of the mountain. The passage to the garden was by a long flight of stone steps, descending from a door in the castle wall. The garden was well stocked with every thing that could please the eye; here were clusters of budding roses, and flowers in all their varieties—long rows of pears with their silver blossoms, and blushing cherries peeping from beneath their dark green leaves. The mother and daughter stood, for awhile, near a fountain in the middle of the garden, amusing themselves with the play of the water, which shot up its crystal wreaths in the oright beams of the summer sun, and descended in a thousand diamond drops, glittering with all the colors of the rainbow. Then retiring to a bower, shaded with the trellised and clustering vine, they began to make clothes for a poor orphan

THE CARRIER-PIGEON

girl. No sound was heard in the garden ; all was still and tranquil, save, now and then, the sweet song of the linnet on a bough of a neighboring tree, or the ceaseless and monotonous splash of the distant fountain.

As they were sitting together, something flew so rapidly into the bower, that they could not know what it was. Both looked around in alarm, and instantly a large hawk darting down, poised itself on its broad wings at the entrance of the bower. But it flew off when it saw persons within. Agnes sat there so terrified, that she dared not look around her, to know what it was that took refuge in the bower ; but the mother, with a smile, said to her, " Do not fear, it is only a poor bird that has fled in here from the hawk ; look," said she, pointing, " it is a snow-white little dove. In its fright, it took

THE CARRIER-PIGEON

refuge there behind you." She then took the dove in her hand, and casting an inquiring glance at Agnes, said, "I will roast it for you this evening."

"Roast it?" exclaimed Agnes, seizing the dove with both her hands, as if her mother was going to kill it on the spot. "Oh! no, dear mother, you cannot be serious. The poor little thing flew to me for refuge—can I consent to kill it? Oh! how beautiful it is; white as the driven snow, and its little feet, red as glowing coral. Its poor heart beats; and its innocent eyes are fixed on me, as if they would say—do not hurt me—No! poor bird, I will not hurt thee. You sought, and you must have my help. I will take the best care of you."

"Right, my dear child," said the mother, affectionately. "You knew my wishes. I only wished to try you. Bring the bird

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

to your chamber and feed it. We should never spurn the unhappy when they seek our aid. We must be kind to all that are in grief, and have pity on animals themselves."

By the mother's orders a little dove-cot, with red roof and green lattice-work, was prepared, and placed in a corner of Agnes' chamber, where she fed the dove every day with clean corn and fresh water, supplying it also with sand. It soon became accustomed to Agnes, and grew tame and domesticated. When she opened the door of the little cage, it would fly out and pick the corn from her hand. In a short time it became so perfectly content, that it showed not the slightest wish to recover its liberty.

At break of day, while Agnes was yet asleep, the dove would fly towards her bed, and give her no rest until she arose

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

and gave it food. Agnes complained to her mother of this annoyance. "But I know," said she, "how to prevent the restless little thing from disturbing my sleep. I will fasten the cage door every night, and keep it locked up until I awake in the morning." "Oh, no," answered the mother, "rather let the dove teach you to rise early in the morning. Early rising is good for the health, and cheers and contents the mind. Surely, you ought to be ashamed if you arose later than a dove." Agnes obeyed her mother's advice, and always arose early in the morning.

One day Agnes was sitting near the window, sewing. The window was open, and the dove, which had been picking some crumbs at her feet, suddenly flew out, and lighted on the next house. Agnes was alarmed, and screamed aloud. Her mother ran to know what was the matter

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

“O, my dove!” said Agnes, pointing to the roof where it perched, and was basking in the sun. “Call it back,” said the mother. Agnes did so, and to her inexpressible delight the dove instantly obeyed the call, and perched on her outstretched hand. While Agnes was thus happy, her mother said, “Be you ever as obedient to me as the dove is to you, and you will make me always as happy as you are now. Will you not make me happy?” Agnes did promise, and kept her word. No daughter could be more obedient.

Another day, after Agnes had watered her flower-knots in the garden, she was tired, and sat on the green bank beside her mother over the fountain. The dove, which was now so tame that it had full liberty to fly where it pleased, came and perched on a stone to drink in the fountain. “See, mother,” said Agnes, “how

THE CARRIER-PIGEON

carefully it flies from one moss-covered stone to another; how cautiously it avoids the mud between the stones: how cleanly the little thing is. White is the color most easily soiled, and yet there is not a single speck on the snowy plumage of the careful bird." "But, see how careless Agnes is," said the mother, pointing to Agnes' white frock. When bringing the water-pot from the fountain, she had not taken good care of her clothes, so that some spots were found on them. She blushed when she saw them, but from that day her mother had never to complain of the slightest soil in Agnes' dress.

She once took a journey with her mother, in which she enjoyed the greatest amusement. In the evening, when she came home, the dove at once flew to meet her, and gave very clear signs of its great joy for her return. "It was sorrowful all

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

day for your absence," said one of the maids, "and sought you in every part of the house. It amazes me, how a little animal like it, that has no sense, can know its mistress and love it so much." "No doubt," said Agnes, "I am more than repaid by this gratitude for the few grains of corn I give it every day." "But are you, Agnes," said her mother, "always so grateful? Look back to all the joys you have had to-day. Have you thanked God for them? Oh! let not a poor bird put you to the blush." Before this time Agnes had not reflected much on her obligation of gratitude to God; but, henceforward, she never retired to rest without pouring forth her most ardent thanks to God for all the joys and favors he had bestowed on her that day.

"Dear little dove," said Agnes, one morning early, as she sat at her work,

THE CARRIER-PIGEON

and looked at the bird perched on the edge of the table, with its bright, beaming eyes fixed on its mistress, "I have got many good lessons from you, and I owe you many thanks." "Oh, but the best is to come," said the mother. "The beautiful white dove is a lovely emblem of innocence. Candid, artless, and unaffected—it has no guile, no deceit, no dissimulation. Our divine Redeemer included all those qualities in the words, 'Be simple as doves.' Oh, ever aim at that noble simplicity; avoid guile, deceit, and all sorts of evil. God grant that it may one day be said with truth, 'Agnes is as innocent and candid as a dove.'"

The prayer was heard, for such was the character of Agnes with all who knew her.

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

CHAPTER II.

ROSALIND AND HER DAUGHTER EMMA.

THE Knight Theobald returned home one evening from an expedition against a powerful band of robbers, who had long infested the country, and kept the whole population in constant alarm. Delighted at the success of his expedition, and amidst his family, he told with great animation how he had captured many of the robbers and handed them over to the law, and dispersed the others so that they could no longer trouble the peace and happiness of the land. The narrative was long. Ottilia and Agnes, though they listened attentively, busily plied their spinning-wheels. It was very late, the chamber lights were already on the table, when suddenly a beautiful lady, pale and

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

dressed in black, entered the parlor, with a little girl, also in black, leaning on her arm. The knight and his wife and daughter rose to salute the stranger.



“God bless you, noble knight,” said the lady, weeping; “though I have never even seen you before, I come to claim your protection. I am Rosalind of Hohenberg

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

—this is my daughter Emma. My great afflictions are not, perhaps, unknown to you. My good husband died of the wounds received in that great battle fought last year. Oh, what a loss I have had in him! A virtuous man—a kind and affectionate husband—the best of fathers. You knew him well. Generous to all who asked his help, he left no provision for us here—his treasures are stored up in heaven. We are now in great danger of being deprived even of the necessaries of life. My two neighbors, both rapacious knights, are oppressing me. One wishes to seize my corn-fields and pasture-lands, up to the very walls of my castle; the other threatens to rob me of my forests, that come up to my gates at the other side. Oh, how much they are changed! Avarice, the cause of so many crimes on this earth, has changed my hus-

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

band's friends into my bitterest enemies
Too well he foresaw this, and with his
last breath he mentioned your name.
'Put your confidence,' said he, 'in God
and Sir Theobald, and no enemy shall
dare touch a hair of your head.' Oh,
realize the words of my dying husband.
Alas! what shall become of me, if I have
nothing but my castle walls! Can the
stones feed myself and my Emma? Should
you—which heaven forbid—meet my hus-
band's fate, and your lady and daughter
be poor and helpless as we, may they find
a strong arm to help them in the hour of
need!"

Little Emma, who was about the same
age as Agnes, approached the knight, and,
with tears in her eyes, implored him—
"Noble knight, be a father to me, and do
not reject me."

Theobald stood with a serious air, his

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

eyes on the ground, and one hand, according to his custom, raised to his lips. "Oh, dear father," said Agnes, crying, "do pity them. When the dove, chased by the hawk, sought help from me, my mother said that we should never reject those who fly to us for aid. She was delighted that I had pity on the dove. And do not this little lady and her mother deserve pity more than the dove? Oh, save them from the grasping claws of these knights—they are wicked hawks."

The knight was deeply affected, and answered with earnestness, "Yes, Agnes, with the help of God I will protect them. I was silent, not because I did not feel for their wrongs, but because I was thinking how I could avenge them, and protect this excellent lady and her innocent daughter." The knight brought a chair for the mother, and little Agnes did the same for

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

the daughter. Ottilia went to prepare a supper better than usual for her guests; for in those days ladies even of high birth superintended such matters in person.

Theobald then asked the grounds of the exorbitant claims of the two knights, and was satisfied that Rosalind was deeply injured. "Justice is on your side," said he, "and to-morrow, at break of day, I with some of my retainers shall try what we can do for you. Remain here with your daughter until I return, and you can then bring home with you the good news I expect to have for you." The whole company then partook of some refreshment, and spent a happy night together. In the morning Theobald, accompanied by his retainers, set out for Rosalind's castle.

Agnes was delighted that Emma was to spend some days with her. She conducted her young guest to her chamber

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

and through the garden, and showed her all her wardrobe, her flowers, and her dove. In a short time they were warm friends; for Emma, too, was a good and well-educated girl.

In a few days Theobald returned. "Good news," said he, when he entered the hall. "Noble lady, your enemies have renounced their extravagant claims, and all strife is at an end. Though I proved clearly that their claims were unjust, they paid very little attention to me; but they took another tone when I told them, that the slightest injury done to you would be a declaration of war against me. Have courage and hope, lady! no stranger shall reap your fertile fields, nor fell the trees of your paternal forests."

The afflicted lady now forgot her griefs, and tears of gratitude glistened in her eyes. "God, the faithful protector of the

widow and orphan," said she—"God will reward you for the favor you have done to me and my child; may He protect you from all evil, and guard you in the hour of need."

She then prepared to return without delay to Hohenberg. Agnes and her young friend were overwhelmed with grief for their separation. The stranger could not be allowed to go without a present; and as she had often expressed a wish to have a tame dove. Agnes brought down her own, and, with tears in her eyes, gave it to Emma. At first she positively refused to take it; but after a warm contest with her affectionate friend, she consented. Agnes gave her the cage also; and recommended the poor dove with as much earnestness, as a mother intrusting her child to a stranger's care.

But Emma was scarcely gone, when

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

Agnes was sorry for having given the dove. "Mother," said she, "it would have been much better, had I given my gold ear-rings, as a keepsake, to my young friend." But her mother said, "You can do so, when she comes again. The present you gave was far more suitable on this occasion. Had it been richer, it would not have been so welcome, and might, perhaps, have given offence. To present her the thing most dear to you, however trifling in itself, was creditable to you, and gave her the strongest proof of your love. Do not regret what you have done. See, your good father was ready to risk his life to defend an injured lady, and should not you renounce your greatest pleasure, to cheer an afflicted orphan? Whoever does not learn to sacrifice every earthly good, no matter how dear, for the benefit of his afflicted

THE CARRIER-PIGEON

fellow-creatures, can have no real love for them. Such sacrifices are the noblest that we can offer to God. He will reward you amply for your generous present."

CHAPTER III.

THE TWO PILGRIMS.

LADY ROSALIND now lived content and in peace within the walls of her old castle, which lay in the deep recess of a wooded mountain. Late one evening, two pilgrims knocked at the castle gate, and asked for a night's lodging. They were dressed in the usual style of pilgrims—a long dark brown robe, scallop-shells in their hats, and the pilgrim's staff in their hands. The porter sending to his lady for orders, she at once told him to con-

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

duct the strangers to the lower chambers and supply them with a good supper and a goblet of wine. Rosalind and her daughter came down, when supper was over.

The pilgrims told them many tales of the Holy Land. All the inmates of the castle were grouped eagerly around them, but none was more deeply interested in the wonderful narratives, than little Emma. The tears flowed at each story, and before they were over, she would give the world to visit, even once, that Holy Land, where our Saviour lived and died. It was a pious wish, but her joy was dashed as she feared she could never gratify it.

“Dear Emma,” said her mother, “any hour you please, you can visit that Holy Land, and see the Mount of Olives and Calvary, and the Tomb of our Lord. You have only to read the history of Jesus Christ, and you can follow Him

THE CARRIER-PIGEON

through His charitable journeyings, and catch up His words as they fall from His lips, and witness His Passion, Death, and Resurrection. If we profit by His lessons, His example, His sufferings, His death, and His resurrection, we have the Holy Land within our hearts. Yes—did all men study His history, and strictly obey His law, this wide world would become one Holy Land.”

The pilgrims then made particular inquiries about the neighboring country, and especially about the castle of Falkenberg. They extolled Knight Theobald to the skies. “If his castle be not too much out of our way,” said the elder pilgrim, “and if I thought I could find him at home, I could not think of passing without paying him a visit.” Rosalind told him that Falkenberg castle lay directly in their road, and that Theobald, who had

THE CARRIER-PIGEON

just returned from an excursion, would certainly be at home. "I am most happy to hear it," said the pilgrim. "It is my dearest wish to see him under his own roof. To-morrow, at daybreak, we start for Falkenberg."

Rosalind and her daughter sent a thousand kind remembrances to Theobald, Ottilia, and Agnes. Emma gave some money to the pilgrims, which her mother had given her for the purpose, and told them not to forget, on any account, to tell her friend Agnes, that the dove was going on well. As the good lady had learned from the inquiries of the strangers, that they were unacquainted with the country, she ordered one of the servant-boys to be ready in the morning early, to conduct them; and then taking her leave, she wished the pilgrims a good-night.

Next morning the pilgrims set out

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

Their young guide was proud of his errand, and insisted on being allowed to carry their wallets. They took no notice of him, but walked on silently. For a while their road was very uneven, up hill and down hill, but at length, having reached the top of a very steep hill, they came on a level road, and began to converse in Italian. Their guide was also an Italian. Leonard was the name usually given him in the castle, but he was much better pleased to be called Leonardo, as in his native land. He was a poor orphan boy, whom Sir Adelind had taken up, and brought with him to Germany. Though long accustomed to speak the German language, he had not yet forgotten the Italian. He listened with delight to the pilgrims, and was just going to say how happy he was to hear once more the sweet sounds of his native tongue,—when he

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

suddenly shrunk back, chilled and horrified at what they were saying.

He collected from what he heard, that they were pilgrims in dress only; that this neighborhood was not so unknown to them as they pretended; that they belonged to that band of robbers which Theobald had punished so severely, and that they were now burning for revenge; that under the cloak of piety, they had resolved to go to his castle and get a night's lodging; but that at the dead of night, when all was still, they were to rise and massacre Theobald and all his family, then plunder his castle and reduce it to ashes.

As soon as the towers of Falkenberg appeared in the gray distance, between two wooded mountains, Lupo, the old bandit, said to his younger companion Orso, "See the dragon-nest of that horrible butcher, who brought so many of

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

our brave boys to the gallows. A death of the most racking torture awaits him. We'll chain him, and burn him alive in the flames of his castle."

"Yes," answered Orso; "still the mission endangers our necks. If it fail, we are dead. But a chance of getting the knight's bags of gold is worth the risk."

"His life," said the old robber, with a revengeful scowl. "His murder would give more joy than his bags of gold, though I have an eye to them, too. Once safe out of this venture, and our fortunes are made. We can retire from trade, and live on our money. An idea strikes me just now. What a pleasant thing to dress ourselves in the knight's most splendid robes! You can have his gold collar, and I his knight's cross of precious stones. We can then fly to some foreign land, where no one can recognise us, and there

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

pass for gentlemen, and make the most of our money."

"All very good," said Orso, "but still I have my doubts about the result."

"What doubts?" asked Lupo. "Are not all our plans well-laid and promising? Have we not associates enough at our call? The moment we hang out at the window of our room the three lights which we have taken as the signal, have we not seven stout and daring comrades, who have been on the watch for us these many nights past? We can admit them through the little garden gate, which is easily opened from the inside. One of those men, who was once a resident in the castle, knows every nook and chamber and turn in it, as well as in his own house. Nine of us, well armed, will have to do with a few men in their beds. Courage alone is required—success is certain."

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

The blood froze in poor Leonardo's veins at this atrocious project, but he did not let them see that he knew what they were saying. He walked carelessly behind them, now and then plucking some flowers, or playing a little tune on a leaf; but all the time he was praying fervently to God, that he might defeat the diabolical scheme of these horrible men. Leonardo resolved to accompany them to the castle, and make their plans known to the brave Theobald.

While they were still arranging the best means of succeeding, the old robber slipped on a narrow footpath, and had nearly fallen into a deep chasm in the rock. In the fall he was caught by some brambles, and the thorns raising his pilgrim cloak, Leonardo saw under that long dark-brown dress, a scarlet doublet and a glittering breastplate of polished steel. A long,

THE CARRIER-PIGFON.

sharp dagger, was also visible. But the boy seemed as if he had not seen them. The old villain suddenly concealed the dagger and pulled down his pilgrim cloak, casting at the same time a hawk's glance at the poor trembling boy.

They now came to the brink of a frightful ravine, through which a mountain torrent, swollen with the heavy rains, roared and tumbled beneath them. Two projecting rocks met halfway over the gulf, and between them lay a long slender plank of fir, secured only at one side. This was their only path. As they approached it, the old robber said in Italian, "That lad may have seen that I am armed, and may suspect us. When he is getting over, I must send him to the bottom. Then we are safe—he can tell no tales."

At these terrible words a deadly chill shot through poor Leonardo's frame. He

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

drew back several paces from the frightful abyss. "I am afraid," said he; "my head is dizzy." "Don't be afraid, boy, come here to me and I will help you over," said the old villain, rushing, with outstretched arms, to seize him. But Leonardo screamed and fled, and had made up his mind to plunge into a thicket if the robber came near him. "Ah," said the poor fellow, trembling in every limb, "let me go; both of us would fall into the flood. And though I got over safe, how could I come back? Let me go home; you don't want a guide now. When you are over the bridge, Falkenberg is near you; you want no guide."

The young robber, who did not much like to cross the dangerous plank, at once ascribed the poor boy's terror to the same cause. "If the simple body," said he in Italian, "suspected any thing, I will con-



THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

sent to be flung down this gulf; and, suppose that he had seen your armor and dagger, what then? he does not understand our language, and, of course, does not know what we were plotting. Besides, no one would pay any attention to his childish prattling. Let the poor scamp take to his heels."

"Well, be it so," said the old robber; "but for greater security we must cut this plank, and then, though the fellow should know, he cannot baffle our plans. There is Falkenberg. There is no bridge or ford over this stream for several leagues at either side of us. News cannot come here until our work is done."

The two bandits then took their wallets from the boy, and allowed him to go away, without one kind word for having conducted them. They passed the bridge, and when they were at the other side, old

THE CARRIER-PIGEON

Lupo shouted aloud, "You were right, lad; that was a dangerous passage. It is crazy from age, and almost rotten. Lives would certainly be lost on it; so it is much better to break it down, and then people must build a more secure one."

The two bandits then pulled down the old planks. They tumbled with a loud splash into the foaming flood, and were whirled rapidly over the rugged precipice. As soon as the pretended pilgrims disappeared behind the rocks on the opposite side, Leonardo ran with all his might to bring the terrible news to his lady. Not one soul in the whole neighborhood he knew to whom he could safely intrust his secret, with any hope of putting the doomed victims on their guard.

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

CHAPTER IV.

FEARS AND HOPES.

Nothing could be farther from Lady Rosalind's thoughts within the secure walls of her castle, than the awful fate that was descending on the noble Theobald. Since the departure of the pilgrims, Emma's mind was entirely captivated by their narratives, and she asked her mother a thousand questions about the Holy Land. The day was given to their usual occupations ; but at the approach of evening, when the sun was descending, and a refreshing breeze cooled the air, they descended from their mountain castle, to view their lands in the adjacent valley. Every thing promised an abundant harvest. Some fields waving with golden corn, gave rich hopes of an overflowing granary ; while others,

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

gleaming with the brilliant hues of the blue flax-blossom, rivalled the summer sky in beauty. The mother and daughter felt doubly happy, because they looked upon these fields as a recent present from heaven, and fervently thanked their God for his bounteous favors.

Leonardo, reeking with perspiration, and almost out of breath, rushed down to his mistress. "O lady," said he, clapping his hands, "horrible news! They are not pilgrims, but robbers and murderers, these men that I went with; they are murdering Theobald and all his family, and plundering and burning his castle." The frightened boy could say no more; he sunk down exhausted under a tree by the roadside, and remained for some time insensible, and unable to utter a single word.

Rosalind and Emma were overwhelmed with grief. "Gracious heaven," exclaim-

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

ed the mother, "what shocking intelligence! Oh, noble knight, generous lady!"

"And my own kind Agnes," said Emma, trembling and pale as death. "Can I live if she and her good parents are murdered?"

"Run, Emma," said the mother, "run to the castle. I and this poor boy will follow as soon as we can. Run with all your might, and give the alarm to our retainers. They must start instantly for Falkenberg, to defend them. Let them drive, though they were to sink their horses to the earth."

Emma sprung swift as a roe up the steep side of the mountain, and rushing into the castle gate, alarmed all the domestics by her cries. They rushed into the court, and she told them that fire and sword were descending on devoted Falkenberg. The news fell like a thunderbolt

THE CARRIER-PIGEON

on the whole family ; they cursed the pretended pilgrims, and could not feel more excited were their own castle in flames over their heads.

Rosalind arrived shortly after, accompanied by Leonardo, of whom she had in the mean time learned all the particulars. "Why are you standing here in idle sorrow," said she ; "start—run—save them."

"Impossible, my lady," said an old gray-haired groom. "The two villains have too great a start of us ; they are in Falkenberg already. It is almost evening now, and Falkenberg is not less than fifteen leagues distant. How could we travel so rapidly in a dark night, over a bad road, torn up now by the winter floods ? The best horse in the stable could not bring me to Falkenberg before daybreak ; besides, our farm-horses are bad roadsters, and all the war-horses were sold after my

THE CARRIER-PIGEON

master's death. There is not in the whole country, far or near, a single horse that could well stand half the journey."

The good lady wrung her hands in an agony of grief. "Oh, God," she exclaimed, raising her hands and eyes to heaven, while her tears flowed copiously, "there is no help but in thee. O, have pity on the good people who had pity on me! Pray, Emma, pray that God may blast the project of the villains."

Emma wept, and clasping her hands, prayed fervently—"Gracious God, assist them as they assisted us." Her prayer was echoed by all the attendants, who sympathized sincerely in the sorrow of their lady.

"My good men," said Rosalind once more, "it may be almost impossible to reach Falkenberg before midnight, but at least make the attempt. A few words

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

would save their lives. A moment may decide all. If poor Leonardo were not exhausted, and almost killed, he could run as swift as when he won the race some-time ago. Martin," she said, turning to a little boy, "you run swiftly; start at once. The footpath is one-third shorter than the road. Arrive in time at Falkenberg, and a hundred florins are yours."

"Impossible, my lady," said the boy. "Who could travel these dark nights over a rough mountain path, without falling over some precipice?"

"Besides," added Leonardo, "there is no crossing the river; a man could not do it without wings."

"Wings," said Emma, while her eyes danced with joy. "A plan strikes me for sending word to Falkenberg. Knight Theobald told me, that if I did not keep my dove closely locked, it would certainly

THE CARRIER-PIGEON

go home. The distance is great, but it will find its way. Let us fasten a note on the dove's neck, and it will soon be in Falkenberg."

"Oh, thanks be to God," exclaimed the mother. "I think he has heard our prayer. It was your good angel, Emma, that put that thought in your head."

Emma ran and brought down the dove, while her mother was writing the note. They tied it firmly to the red collar that Emma had placed on the dove's neck. She then, accompanied by her mother and all the domestics, brought out the dove, and let it off outside the castle walls. The dove shot up straight into the blue sky, and after sailing two or three times over the castle, turned towards Falkenberg, and was soon out of sight. There was not a soul in the castle of Hohenberg that did not praise the happy thought of

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

their young lady. Hearty prayers followed the poor dove. A vessel laden with gold could not have more sincere and anxious benedictions.

Rosalind and her daughter were now a prey to harrowing suspense. "Will the dove find the way, and be there in time?" asked the mother. "Oh, if the hawk should pounce on it, or if it fail on the way, or arrive too late, or not be seen and admitted should it reach Falkenberg, how dreadful are the consequences?" The mother and daughter sat down near the window that looked towards Falkenberg, and as they gazed with anxious eyes on the surrounding prospect, their hearts were raised to heaven in silent prayer. The mists of evening began to fall, and filled them with the most gloomy forebodings. They shuddered at the thought, that a 'urid glare in the distance, reflecting the

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

flames of Falkenberg, might too soon tell them that the dove had not arrived. They never stirred from the window, nor closed their eyes during the whole night.

Midnight soon came. A frightful storm howled through the forest, and the sky towards Falkenberg became dark as pitch. Suddenly, to their great horror, it grew bright. They trembled, and prayed. "Merciful heaven!" exclaimed Emma, "the flames are ascending higher and higher every moment; oh, look, how the storm agitates them!" They would have fainted, had they not soon discovered their mistake; for, to their great joy, they saw that it was the full moon, shooting her beams through the murky heavens, and at last rising like a large shield over the summit of the mountain. Still they remained at the window; but they saw no traces of that fiery red that is usually reflected in a dark

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

sky from a building in flames. At length daylight returned; and with joyful and hearty thanks to God, they welcomed the beams of morning, which closed so harassing and anxious a night.

CHAPTER V.

THE RESCUE.

ROSALIND and Emma were now satisfied that the murderers had not succeeded in burning Falkenberg. Still they were uncertain whether Theobald and his wife and daughter might not have been murdered. Many a time did Rosalind exclaim, "Oh! what would I not give for good news from Falkenberg: I would give up all I have in this world." "And I would give all my money, too," said Emma. But

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

the fate of Falkenberg was as yet a mystery to them, and their only resource was to wait patiently for news.

The evening before, Theobald, Ottilia, and Agnes were, after sitting down to table, happy and unsuspecting, as they always were. The rays of the descending sun shone through the round windows, and lighted up with their ruddy hues the old baronial hall. The warder announced two pilgrims. "Take good care of them," said Theobald, "and after dinner I will see them myself. Let them come up and give us an account of their pilgrimage. In the mean time, let them have dinner and a goblet of good wine to make them eloquent." The warder retired, and Agnes was indulging in the joyous anticipation of an interesting narrative. Alas! little did they dream of the frightful fate that hung over them!

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

As they were sitting happy and contented there, Agnes suddenly exclaimed in wonder, "Oh! my little dove." And indeed there it was at the window, with its little wings outspread, and pecking at the glass, as if to ask leave to get in. Agnes opened the window; the dove flew in, and perched on her shoulder. "Look," said the mother, "what a beautiful red collar it has got; and there is some paper tied to it—a letter, I believe. What singular tricks come into children's heads!"

Theobald examined the paper closely, and saw written on it the words, "Read quickly." "A pressing message this," said he with a smile. He opened the paper—read it. "Good heaven," said he, turning pale, "what is this?" "What?" asked the mother and daughter, in the greatest alarm. Theobald then read aloud:—

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

“Most noble Knight—The two pilgrims who are with you this night, are two robbers of that gang against which you were lately engaged. The elder is called Lupo, the younger Orso. They have armor and sharp daggers under their pilgrim’s dress. This night they intend to murder you and your wife and daughter; to pillage your castle, and then give it up to the flames. They intend then to put on your dress, your knight’s uniform, the golden chain and the diamond cross, and thus to deceive others. Seven other villains are lurking in the neighborhood for the concerted signal—three lights from the strangers’ room—upon which they are to enter the castle, and aid their associates. The two robbers are to open the garden gate, and admit them. Heaven grant that the dove may arrive safe, and that you all may be saved! I had no other means of sending

THE CARRIER-PIGEON

word to you. Do not forget to send instant news of your preservation to your grateful

“ ROSALIND.”

“ Merciful Providence !” said the mother, with great emotion, “ how wonderful are thy ways ! The dove is a messenger from heaven to us, as it was once to Noah. Oh Agnes, let us bend the knee with the same feelings as they did in the ark : our preservation is not a whit less miraculous.”

Theobald, too, knelt ; and clasping his hands and raising his eyes to heaven, devoutly thanked God for this great goodness. Then ordering his wife and daughter to retire to another chamber, he buckled on his armor, and girding on his sword, ordered two of his bravest soldiers to be ready at a word.

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

Word was then sent to the pilgrims to come up. They entered the chamber with a gentle air and a thousand salutations; and Lupo, with an humble look and in a low and respectful tone, thus spoke to Theobald: "Most noble Lord and Knight, we come direct from Hohenberg, and bring you a thousand kind remembrances. O how happy we feel to see, face to face, that noble knight whose heroism is known all over the world—who has the constant prayer of the widow and the orphan, and the oppressed, and whom the good Lady Rosalind praises and blesses as her most generous benefactor! Oh, what a noble lady she is! She treated us in the most princely manner. And her amiable daughter Emma—the little angel—was melted even to tears with the pious stories of our pilgrimage. But we have time enough to tell you and your noble family all the

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

news from Hohenberg. For the present, we discharge our commission by assuring you that the mother and daughter, and that beautiful little dove too, are as well as you could wish them."

Theobald at all times hated flattery, but it roused him now to such a degree that he could scarcely restrain himself. Still he suppressed his anger, and in a solemn but calm tone asked, "Who are you?" "Poor pilgrims," they answered; "we are returning from the Holy Land to Thuringia, where we were born." "Your names?" said Theobald. "Herman is my name, and my companion's is Burkhart." "What do you want in my castle?" continued Theobald. "This night's lodging"—they replied; "we start in the morning at cock-crow. O how happy our poor friends will be to see us!"

"Wretch!" exclaimed the knight, in a

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

thundering voice. "You are not Herman and Burkhart," said he, drawing his sword; "but you are Lupo, and that young villain is Orso. You are not returning from the Holy Land, you are robbers and cut-throats—not pilgrims. Germany is not your native place, you are not going to Thuringia. You come here to rob, and burn, and murder, and not for a night's lodging. But I pay you in your own coin—fire and sword shall be your punishment—aye—do you think your pilgrim dress, your crosses, and your shells deceive me? Here, servants, strip them at once, and let us see them in their own dress. Disarm them, chain them, and throw them into the dungeon."

The servants seized them and pulled off the pilgrim's dress, and there they stood armed to the teeth in coats of mail. "Horrible hypocrisy!" exclaimed the knight,

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

“to disguise the black murderer’s heart under the dress of piety, that crime alone well deserves death.” The two robbers were then pinioned and cast into the dungeon.

When they found themselves alone, “How could that knight,” asked the younger, “know every thing so well? He knows even what we were saying on the road, about taking his clothes, and passing ourselves as knights. Can it be that the boy understood us, and betrayed the plot?”

“If so,” answered the old fellow, “he must have flown in through the castle window. I never took my eyes off the castle gate, and not one soul entered after ourselves. There is something wrong here—the knight must have a league with the devil.’

The old villain then became so inflamed

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

with rage that he poured out awful imprecations on the knight. "That crue. Theobald," said he, gnashing his teeth, "is the ruin of us all." The obdurate wretch did not seem to know that his own evil deeds were the cause of his ruin.

But Orso soon began to murmur and weep and upbraid Lupo. "O! that I had not followed your bad example!" said he; "you promised me a long and happy life, and what awaits me now but a death of tortures? You told me that our life was not wicked, and that God pardons crime in this, and sometimes even in the next life. But the sense of my own conscience told me a very different tale and always threatened me with impending judgments. O! that I had not listened to that voice! What good can all my ill-gotten treasures do for me now? Had I supported myself by the hardest labor in the forest or the

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

road, and kept my conscience clear, how happy would I not be in comparison with my present state! But the hand of the most high and all-seeing Judge has seized me and plunged me into this dark dungeon. All is over with me here below. O! that I could find mercy hereafter! that I may serve as a warning example to young persons, and prevent them from being led into sin and crime, through a desire of wealth and pleasure, to be in the end miserable as I am now!"

In the mean time the servants were engaged, by order of their master, in another important affair. When night fell and the stars were glimmering in the sky, they hung out three lights from the room in which the pilgrims generally resided. The warder and seven others of tried fidelity were posted in the court-yard, near the little gate through which the rob-

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

bers were expected to come. They waited for a long time—but no one appeared. The castle clock had tolled midnight—the moon arose and gilded with her golden beams the frowning battlements of the castle: the servants began to become restless. “Is all our trouble lost?” said they to themselves, “the villains, the moment they see us, will fly and escape through the woods.”

“Oh! I know a plan for enticing them in here securely,” said the warder, starting off at the same moment, and returning in a short time dressed out in the pilgrim’s cloak and cap. “They cannot know me now,” said he, “and you can remain behind that buttress until they come in.” The servants once more patiently resumed their position.

A gentle tap was heard at the gate. The warder opened it cautiously; one o.

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

the robbers was standing there, and mistaking the warder for the pretended pilgrim, asked in a whisper, "Is all right?"

"All right," answered the warder in the same low tone; "make no noise—come in gently."

One after another the seven robbers slipped in to the court-yard. They carried with them pitch torches and other combustibles, and every man had his sword drawn. When the last man entered, the warden locked the door and took out the key, and instantly gave the signal to the servants.

They sprung upon the robbers, and each secured his man. At the same moment the castle gate was thrown open and the knight appeared, accompanied by a troop of his domestics, bearing blazing torches and glittering swords. The light from the moon and torches, made the place as

THE CARRIER-PIGEON

bright as daylight. The robbers were struck powerless by the fear. They had not time to use their arms. They were easily overpowered, and bound with fetters, and flung into the dungeon to receive the reward of their villany.

“Such is the fate of the evil-doer,” said the knight; “he that digs a pit for his neighbor, falls into it himself.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE OLIVE-BRANCH.

LONG and wearily did those hours pass in Hohenberg, where Rosalind and her daughter were anxiously expecting news from Falkenberg. Many a time did poor Emma run up the winding flight of stone-steps, to the top of the tower, and strain

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

her eyes to catch a glimpse of the expected messenger. Dinner hour came, and yet no news—and so violent was the depression of the mother and daughter, that they thought the hours would never pass away. At length, about nightfall, as Emma was looking out through the narrow windows in the tower, she saw, coming up the narrow road that led to the castle, a carriage—attended by a body of armed troopers. She flew at once to her mother, “They are coming!—they are safe!” said she; and both ran to meet their welcome visitors.

Sir Theobald, his wife and daughter, had started at break of day, to bring the good news in person, and to thank their preservers. Theobald sprung from his horse when he saw Rosalind and Emma, and his wife and daughter following him from the carriage, all expressed their

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

warmest thanks for the happy escape from destruction. Words cannot give an idea of this meeting, nor of the joy, the gratitude, the emotions, that beamed in the faces of the two happy families as they entered the castle.

The evening was celebrated with all the pomp of a festival. The plot, and its discovery and defeat, were the sole topic of conversation. Leonardo was brought up, and obliged to tell every word he had heard the robbers say on the road. He did so—and when he came to that place where the young robber pleaded so hard that he should not be flung into the precipice, “I wish,” said he, “to appeal to your mercy in behalf of that man—let his punishment be merciful, since he was merciful himself.” All applauded this good thought of the boy.

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

When dinner was over, Sir Theobald seized his silver goblet, "Here," said he, "is to the good Emma! it is her happy thought of THE CARRIER-PIGEON that we ought to thank for our own lives, and the preservation of old Falkenberg."

"Praise be to God," said Rosalind, "that we have much reason to be pleased with our children. But they must not be too proud of their good deed. For, that poor boy, Leonardo, who almost killed himself with running, deserves more thanks than they."

"You are certainly right," said Theobald, filling his goblet, which he tasted and then presented to the boy. "Drink to our health!" said he; "you shall be my page; for your fidelity ennobles you and gives you a title to honor."

"Deeply," said Ottilia, "ought we to

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

cherish the memory of the good Adalrich, for, if he had not taken that orphan boy into his protection—where would we and ours be now?”

“Certainly,” said Rosalind, “the favor which my husband did to that boy, has been paid back to us one hundredfold, in your preservation. But has not Theobald been more generous to me and my orphan daughter? The prompt relief he gave us against our enemies, could not go unrewarded. He preserved us, and God preserved him. God could not forget Otilia’s and Agnes’ affectionate solicitude for me and my daughter. To Him alone be praise and glory!”

“Yes,” concluded the knight, “to God, here, as always, the first acknowledgment is due. He has mercifully looked down on us; and by the agency of an innocent

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

little pigeon, has wrought great wonders in our favor—eternal praises to His name! But we must not be ungrateful, nevertheless, to our generous friends. What my sword could not have effected—to secure my castle against fraud and treachery—that Emma has achieved by the aid of her little pigeon. Women, nay, even children, may effect great good, provided, like Rosalind and Emma, they be but of right heart and place their whole trust in God. And as Emma is now mistress of this castle, and has thus, in her very childhood, without a sword being drawn, secured to the empire an important frontier fortress, I shall request the emperor to grant her, as her armorial bearings, ‘a white pigeon with a green olive-branch.’”

“It is an admirable idea,” said the lady

THE CARRIER-PIGEON

Ottilia, "and we must see that it shall be carried out. Meanwhile, I also must not forget my dear Emma." She made a sign to her daughter, who left the apartment, and after a little the pigeon flew in. Agnes had brought it in a little basket, but had not yet said a word about it to her little friend. The bird at once flew to Emma and perched upon her hand. To her great amazement, it carried a gold olive-branch in its beak.

"My dear Emma," said Ottilia, "this gold olive-branch—the emblem of deliverance from peril, must be to you a little token of our gratitude. It was my mother's bridal gift to me, for it was in time of war and distress, and I have worn it as a hair-bodkin, for which it was intended. My mother, when she handed it to me, repeated a simple old rhyme, which is ap-

THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

propriate to this occasion also, and has been fulfilled in your history.

‘In every peril, let this olive be
Emblem of God’s protecting power to thee:
Even as to Noah, in the days of yore,
So let it be, till life shall be no more.’”





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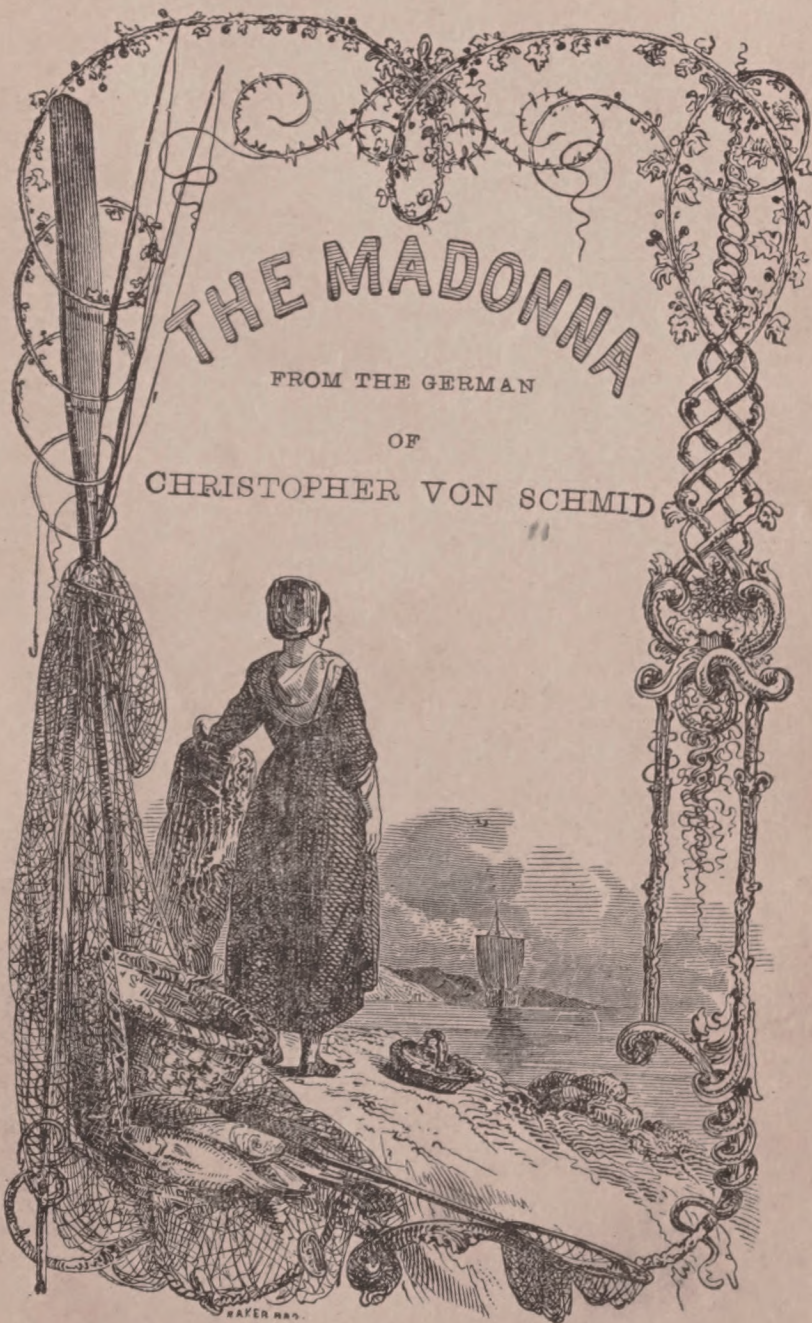
THE

MADONNA.



Theodora looked at the present for a moment
and burst into tears"—Page 9

THE MADONNA
FROM THE GERMAN
OF
CHRISTOPHER VON SCHMID





CHAPTER I.

IN a forest on the banks of the Danube, lived Theodora, a fisherman's widow, in her lonely cottage. Her husband had been lately cut off in the prime of manhood, leaving to her, as the sole consola-

THE MADONNA.

tion of her early widowhood, Augustus, an only son, a fine, sprightly boy, about five years old. She devoted all her care to give him a good religious education, and hoped one day to see him following his father's trade, in his father's house. For the present, the fishing could not be carried on; and it was a sad sight for the poor widow, whenever her eye rested on the fishing-tackle hanging on her cottage wall, or the fishing-boat lying idle outside the door. Still, she was able to support herself by her needle; and many a time did midnight, while her only son was sleeping soundly, surprise her at the work which she plied for his sake.

The little son's only thought, from morning till night, was how he could please his mother. If she wept, as she always did when she remembered her husband, he endeavored, in his own art-

THE MADONNA.

less and affectionate way, to dry up her tears. Some days after the death of her husband, she was visited by her brother, who brought her a present of a fish from the neighboring village. Theodora looked at the present for a moment, and burst into tears. "Ah!" said she, "I thought I should never see such another fish in my cottage."

"O mother," said her son, "why do you cry? When I am big I will bring you fish enough."

The poor mother could not but smile. "Yes, Augustus," said she, "I do hope you will be the consolation and support of my old age. Be as good and honest a man as your father, and you will make me the happiest of mothers."

One fine day in August, Theodora had been busily engaged from daybreak, with some nets, which she expected to be able

THE MADONNA.

to finish. Her son, in the mean time, was in the forest gathering nuts, from which she extracted oil to feed her lamp during the long winter nights. The happiness of Augustus knew no bounds, when he returned to his mother, with his little basket under his arm, full of nuts. On such occasions she always praised him, and encouraged him to acquire early these habits of industry, without which there can be no success in life. On this day, he was tired and hungry after returning. The dinner-bell soon rung in the neighboring village, and his mother called him to dinner, which consisted of a bowl of good milk, and some bread, laid on the grass, at the foot of an old oak, in a green plot not far from her cottage.

When the bread and milk had disappeared, his mother said, ' Lie down there,

THE MADONNA.

Augustus, under the shade of that tree, and sleep, for you are tired. I will go to my work, and return at the proper time to call you. Sleep now," said she once more, turning to look at him again, as she was carrying the empty bowl to her cottage. In a few moments she looked again, and saw him fast asleep on the grass, his curly head resting on one arm, while the other grasped the little basket. His face was all smiles, and his ruddy cheeks were sweetly shaded by the flickering shadows of the beech over his head. She tore herself away, and worked hard for a considerable time at her nets. Two hours flew over her as if they were two minutes. She ran to awake her son—but he had disappeared. "The good boy," thought she, "has already returned to his work." Little did she suspect the terrible stroke that was

THE MADONNA.

descending on her. She returned, and stretched out the net on the grass; a few stitches yet remained, which detained her yet a considerable time. But as the boy was not returning, she became uneasy. She went and searched the whole wood, which was about a league long, and half a league broad; but she got no trace of him. "Augustus! Augustus!" she cried, one hundred times at least—but there was no answer: Augustus could not be found!

Her affliction cannot be described; it was like the agonies of death. "Can it be," said she, "that he neglected that warning I gave him so repeatedly, not to go near the river?" The very idea was horrifying: she ran to the river, but no trace of him was there. She returned to the village, weeping and disconsolate. A crowd was soon gathered by her

THE MADONNA

cries: all, especially her brother, compassionated the poor widow, but they could give her no news of her son. They instantly set out to look for him, some in the forest, others in the surrounding fields, others in the river,—but in vain. Night fell, and no man had seen the slightest trace of him.

“If he were drowned in the Danube,” said one of the fishermen, “we shall certainly find his body. We know the currents of the river. He will surely be thrown up on the sand-bank near the old willow-tree.”

The poor mother shuddered at this remark, and returning home, spent a sleepless and wretched night. At break of day she hurried to the bank of the river, to find, perhaps, the body of her son. For days and for weeks she went, morning and evening, to the same spot,

THE MADONNA.

and wandered disconsolate up and down the banks. There was she seen by the fishermen, as they pushed off their boats in the gray glimmering of dawn, or returned home late at night. All deeply sympathized in her affliction.



A considerable time passed on; still the body was not found, nor could the mother get the least intelligence of her lost boy. "Oh!" would she often exclaim,

THE MADONNA

in an agony of grief, "in so short a time to lose my dear husband, and my only child!—it is too hard! Did I not know that it happened by the will of God, I should despair." She accused her own negligence, often wringing her hands, and exclaiming, "Why did I not take better care of my boy!" When the good women of the village came to console her, her only answer was, "O mothers, look to my case, and learn prudence from my neglect."

So violent and lasting was poor Theodora's grief, that she soon became wan as a corpse, and wasted away to a shadow. Some weeks after the loss of her son, as she went to the chapel on Sunday, in the mourning-dress which she had worn since the death of her husband, all her neighbors might be heard remarking among themselves, "Poor Dora! she will soon

THE MADONNA

follow her husband and child to the grave !”

The village pastor, a respectable old man, who always took a lively interest in the happiness of his parishioners, had paid the poor widow several visits. But when he saw her this day in the chapel, her wo-begone appearance excited his warmest sympathy. He sent for her after divine service. The venerable old man, with his snow-white locks flowing over his black robe, was sitting at his desk, writing something in his parish register when she entered. He saluted her kindly; and having requested her to wait a few moments, Theodora turned and fixed her eyes on a little picture, set in an elegant frame, on the wall. She gazed long and devoutly, till the tears came to her eyes.

“Well,” said the good man, laying down

THE MADONNA.

his pen, and rising from his place, "do you like that picture?"

"Oh yes," said poor Theodora, "it is very beautiful; I cannot look on it without crying."

"You know what it is?" asked the priest.

"Oh yes," she answered; "an image of the Virgin Mother of God. I never saw so fine a picture of the Holy Mother, sorrowing for the death of her beloved Son."

"That," said the priest, "is the best and most consoling model for you. Look closely now at the picture. Look: that sword in her breast is an emblem of that poignant grief which, according to the prophecy of Simeon, pierced her heart, at the cruel death of her Son. Her eyes full of tears, and her two hands raised to heaven, express her devotion and confi-

THE MADONNA.

dence in God. Those golden beams playing around her head, are types of that immortal crown which she now wears in heaven, as the reward of her patience in affliction, and her devout submission to the will of God.

“Good Theodora,” he continued, “you have had your own griefs; you have lost your husband and your child. A double-edged sword has pierced your heart. But, like Mary, do you raise your eyes to heaven; bow to the will of God; confide in Him. Pray and hope for help from above. You know how Mary, by confidence in God, and strengthened by his grace, stood at the very foot of the cross. That faith which made her say, ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word,’ when the angels announced the glad tidings to her—was strong in her heart, in this hour

THE MADONNA.

of deep wo, and sustained her in her agony. Nothing but the belief that God does all things for the best—that what He permits, is for our good—can sustain and console you in your affliction. Keep ever in mind the great end of all our earthly woes. The sorrows of this world bear no proportion to the future glory which shall be revealed to us. Virtue is perfected by patience. Christ himself entered into his glory through sufferings; Mary followed the same path; nor is any other road open for us to heaven.”

Theodora was much affected by this exhortation, and found great consolation in the sight of that picture. She could not take her eyes from it. “Yes,” said she, “I will follow the example of that sorrowful mother; I will look to heaven · pray,—hope,—and say from my heart, Lord, thy will be done.’”

THE MADONNA.

“Right,” said the old priest, “right: that pleases me.” Nothing made the good man so happy as to be able to console the afflicted. He took down the picture, and giving it to the poor widow, said, “Lest you might forget your good resolution, take the picture home with you; it is yours. When your heart begins to bleed again; when you feel the edge of that sword of grief, look on this picture; renew your good resolution; your wounds will, after some time, be closed up, and a crown of glory await you in heaven.”

Theodora followed the advice of the good priest, and the violence of her grief gradually subsided. Still, whenever she passed near the tree where she had, for the last time, seen her son, she felt the thorn of grief rankling in her heart. She bethought herself of cutting a niche in

THE MADONNA

the tree, and placing the image in it. "That tree," said she, "always renews my grief; but now it must renew my hope and consolation. Other mothers have the consolation of planting a cross in the churchyard, on the grave of their sons; but this tree must be the monument for my poor Augustus."

She communicated her intention to the priest, who allowed her to carry it into effect. "Do so," said he, "since it gives you consolation."

Accordingly, she cut a round niche in the tree, and placed the image there; and whenever she passed by, and thought of her lost son, she looked on that sweet face, saying to herself, "O Mary! may I, too, be a handmaid of the Lord; may His holy will be done." The prayer always banished her grief, and restored a sweet serenity to her soul.

THE MADONNA.

CHAPTER II.

MR. WAHL.

WHILE the poor mother bewailed her lost son as dead, he was more than a hundred leagues away—alive and in health, in the great city of Vienna, where he lived in a princely mansion and, besides the dress and attendance of a young nobleman, had what was still better—abundant means of acquiring an education in every thing necessary for a Christian and a man.

The history of this strange metamorphose is simply this:—Poor Augustus had no sooner awakened from sleep, and opened his eyes, under the beech-tree, than he started off to the wood, to fill his basket again. When he had nearly halt

THE MADONNA.

filled it, the nuts were not so thick on the ground; and running eagerly forward, he came out of the forest suddenly at the bank of the river. There he saw a large vessel lying at anchor, waiting for some passengers. The passengers already on board, who were some very wealthy, and all of a respectable class, availed themselves of the few moments' delay, to take a walk on the bank. The elder portion of the company walked in the green fields, on the river's edge, while the children were all busily engaged, gathering shells and polished pebbles on the sand-banks. Augustus no sooner appeared, than he was instantly surrounded by a group of young and laughing faces, all prying and peeping to know what he had in his basket. They admired those bright brown nuts, the like of which they had never seen before. Antonia, a lovely

THE MADONNA.

little girl, some years younger than Augustus, exclaimed that she had never seen such beautiful, triangular chestnuts in all her days



“Oh!” said Augustus, who had never seen chestnuts, “these are not the strange things you call them; they are beech-nuts, and you can eat them.” He instantly distributed them in handfuls, to the great delight of the young company.

THE MADONNA.

The good boy's heart overflowed with joy, on seeing so many happy and playful persons of his own age around him. It was a happiness he had never felt before, for he seldom met any children of the village. He joined in the sports of his new acquaintances, and was plentifully supplied by them with their own delicious pears and plums.

He was most anxious to inspect the vessel, for it was the first large one he had ever seen near him. "A floating house, much larger," as he remarked, "than his own house," was a wonder to him. The children brought him into the vessel. Antonia showed to him the beautiful, carpeted cabin, for passengers of the first class.

"Oh!" said Augustus, in amazement, "this is a much grander house than our own." Antonia and her companions then

THE MADONNA.

produced all their playthings; and in the display of such witching novelties, and the splendor around him, can it be a wonder that poor Augustus completely forgot his home? The vessel weighed anchor; her motion was not felt by Augustus; and in a few minutes, standing out in the middle of the stream, she swept majestically down the Danube.

No person in the vessel had ever thought of Augustus. The passengers who had been on board all day, supposed that he must belong to those who embarked last; while they, in turn, supposed he must have been on board before them. It was not till late in the evening, when Augustus began to cry, and call for his mother, that they found they had a strange child on board. All in the vessel were surprised, and not a little alarmed. Some pitied the poor mother

THE MADONNA.

and child ; others could not help laughing at the mishap of the young traveller ; while the sailors stormed and swore, and threatened to throw him into the river.

After some time, the captain came and interrogated the child. "Tell me," said that bluff, sturdy personage, "tell me, boy, to what town or village do you belong?"

"I don't belong to any town or village," answered Augustus.

"Singular enough," remarked the captain. "Where, then, is your house?"

"My house," answered Augustus, "is in the wood, not far from the village."

"Good," said the captain. "What's the name of the village?"

"Eh," said Augustus, "what could be its name but 'the village?' I never heard my mother give it any name.

The bell is ringing in the village for

THE MADONNA

dinner,' she used to say ; or, ' I am going to buy bread in the village.' ”

“ What are your parents' names ? ” asked the captain.

“ My father is dead,” answered Augustus ; “ my mother is called Dora the fisherwoman.”

“ I know,” said the captain, “ Theodora is her Christian name ; but what is her family name ? ”

“ She has no other name but Dora,” answered Augustus ; “ and she often told me we ought never call people by any name but their own.”

The captain saw from the simple answers of the boy, that he had no idea of what a family name was, and that it was useless to press him farther. He became much annoyed, exclaiming, “ I wish the cuckoo had brought you to any other place, rather than to my vessel.”

THE MADONNA.

The tears started to the poor child's eyes, as he answered earnestly, yet without bitterness, "No, it was not the cuckoo that brought me here; I did not see him at all,—but I often heard him in spring."

The whole company laughed heartily; but the captain was in a great difficulty, for it unluckily happened, that the banks by which they were then sailing were uninhabited, and covered with forests, so that no house was to be seen, far or near. Later in the evening, when the sun was setting, they caught a glimpse of a church-spire in the distance. "I can leave the boy," said the captain, "in that village, and let him return to his mother; and, as we could not proceed much farther on our voyage this day, we may cast anchor here for the night."

But Mr. Wahl, Antonia's father, would

THE MADONNA.

not consent to that. He was a wealthy merchant, having large chests of money and valuables, with which he, as well as his companions, were flying from the enemy; for at this time, all Germany was convulsed with the thirty-years' war.

"I heartily wish," said Mr. Wahl, "that the poor mother had her little son safe at home; but that cannot be just now. The enemy is in the neighborhood, marching down to the Danube. A few hours' voyage saves us from the danger of falling into their hands, and losing all our property. Go on, in the name of God."

Mr. Wahl was in such trepidation, that he pressed the captain to sail on during the night, as they were favored with the light of the full moon. The captain said that such a course was unusual; but, on receiving the promise of a large sum of

THE MADONNA

money for himself and his crew, they sailed the whole night, towards Vienna.

At sunrise, they arrived at a little village on the bank of the river. The captain begged the peasants to take the boy, and make inquiries in the country around for his mother, and have him sent home to her. "This," he said, "would be an act of charity to the mother and the child."

But the peasants answered, "Who knows to whom the child belongs? Perhaps we could never find his mother, and be obliged to support him. In these hard times, we have poor enough to support, and cannot afford to take additional burdens on our backs."

Some short time after, they saw another large village at the other side of the river. It was not far from the bank, and as it appeared to be a place of some

THE MADONNA

importance, the captain resolved to see the parish-priest, or mayor, and intrust the child to them. He gave orders to make for the bank; but suddenly Mr. Wahl started up—"Hark!" said he; "do you hear the thunder of the cannon? The enemy are on us; we have not a moment to lose; ahead! ahead! sail on!"

The captain, who feared that in the end the child would be left on his own hands, positively refused to listen to Mr. Wahl. Angry words arose, which might have led to some unpleasant occurrences, if Mrs. Wahl, who was a kind and gentle lady, had not interfered, suggesting to her husband, in a soft and affectionate tone, "that if they took charge of the boy, they would be doing an act of charity, and would avoid these disagreeable contentions."

THE MADONNA.

Mr. Wahl at once gladly assented to the suggestion. "Sail on," said he to the captain; "I will take the child, and provide for him." The captain was now out of his difficulty, and appeared well pleased. The whole company praised Mr. Wahl's generous offer.

The vessel arrived safely at Vienna, where Mr. Wahl purchased a splendid house, and commenced business. He had the best tutors attending his daughter Antonia, and Augustus was allowed to attend the lessons. Notwithstanding his years, he soon exhibited such undoubted indications of superior talents, as surprised all his acquaintances. Moreover, he was so modest and obedient, so friendly and affectionate, and so sincerely pious, that Mrs. Wahl and her husband loved him as if he were their own child. That deep sense of piety and the fear of

THE MADONNA.

God, which had been instilled into his infant mind by his mother, grew stronger every day, and produced its natural effects on his whole conduct.

But what particularly pleased Mr. Wahl, was the decided talent Augustus showed for business. He was placed by his adopted father, in a situation to know all that was necessary for a merchant, and was then appointed to superintend his business. So diligently did he apply himself to his duty, that before he had attained his twentieth year, he was able to conduct, with success, some of the most important transactions in his adopted father's business. By degrees Mr. Wahl extended his trade; he had large contracts for the army, which, though the profit was small, brought him, in the gross, large sums of money. The good man felt that the industry and enterprise

THE MADONNA.

of Augustus was the mainspring of this prosperity ; so he resolved to make him his partner. He then gave him his daughter Antonia in marriage ; and at the close of the war, the emperor of Austria gave Mr. Wahl and his son-in-law patents of nobility, as a reward for their long and valuable services.

Mr. Wahl and his wife did not long survive the peace. They were ardently beloved, and piously attended to the last, by Augustus and Antonia. They died tranquilly, and with the confident hope of once more meeting, and forever, their beloved children, in the realms of eternal light and peace.

Augustus, or, as he was now called, Count von Wahlheim, retired from business, and resolved to purchase a property in Bavaria, or Suabia, which had been the scene of the late desolating war, and

THE MADONNA.

where many estates were now offered for sale. Many proposals were made to him, but he thought it better to see for himself; and, travelling down the country, he selected the beautiful estate of Neukirch, where he found every thing to suit his taste. He gave orders to have the old castle repaired and ornamented, and beautifully furnished; and then returned to Vienna, to accompany his wife and children to their new dwelling.

When Antonia entered, with her husband, on her lately acquired property, and saw, on every side, the mournful and terrible traces of the late war, she was deeply affected. Many houses in the village were heaps of ruins; others threatened every moment to fall in; and extensive tracts of country lay without a vestige of verdure or cultivation. "Poor, poor people," said Antonia, the tears

THE MADONNA.

streaming from her eyes, "we must give you some relief." These sentiments pleased Augustus, because they were his own; and it was immediately decided that a large portion of their capital should be devoted to the improvement of their estate, and the relief of their tenantry. Neat cottages and comfortable farm-houses soon rose around the castle. Rich corn-fields and verdant pasture amply repaid the outlay of capital; and so contented and happy were the tenants, that the praises of their new landlord were always on their lips, and they came in a body, to offer a grateful address. But he answered: "I was a poor boy, and God has made me a rich man, and conferred many other great favors on me. I were unworthy of these favors, if I did not show my gratitude, by making others share my good fortune. I am happy in

THE MADONNA.

being able to relieve your wants, and aid
your industry. To make others happy,
is the greatest happiness."

THE MADONNA.

CHAPTER III.

THE WONDERFUL DISCOVERY.

WHILE Augustus von Wahlheim was living like a great lord, his poor mother, Dora, had many hard trials, in poverty and affliction, all of which, however, she bore with Christian patience, and resignation to the will of God.

Not long after she had lost her son in the forest, the banks of the Danube, near which she lived, became the seat of war, and the enemy's forces took up their position in the forest. Theodora fled from her lonely cottage, and took refuge with her brother in the village, in her father's house. But she was soon obliged to fly. An engagement was fought in the neighborhood, by the contending armies; the

THE MADONNA.

whole village was reduced to ashes, and the inhabitants fled in all directions. Theodora's house was burned: her brother



endeavored to support himself on the fishing-smacks, and she took refuge in the house of her sister, who lived several leagues off. She was kindly received by her sister, and helped her in the education of her numerous family. They lived to

THE MADONNA

gether in peace, and supported each other under the heavy calamities which both had suffered from the war. After some years, Theodora received a letter from her brother, informing her that his wife was dead ; that his two daughters were married during the war ; and requesting her to return and live with him. Theodora returned to her brother.

As soon as she came to her native village, she visited the forest, and searched for the beech-tree, where she had placed the image of the Blessed Virgin, which she had forgotten in her flight. But what a change had come over that well-known spot ! The path that led to her house had disappeared completely, overgrown with long rank grass and thick brambles. Large trees stretched out their long arms over the spots, which before had been covered with underwood

THE MADONNA.

many old trees, familiar to poor Theodora, had disappeared. Not a trace of her cottage was to be seen; even the spot on which it stood, could scarcely be recognised. A dark, impenetrable wood had closed over and around it. She searched for a long time, but fruitlessly, for that beech-tree under which she had prayed and wept so frequently. She worked her way through thorns and brambles, and closely examined around and around the bark of all the beech-trees. "Though I may not find the picture," thought she, "at least the niche in the bark will tell me where it was."

"Don't be giving yourself useless trouble," said a venerable old man, who was gathering rotten timber in the forest; "I think the tree was cut down long ago. Things go here in the forest as they do with us in the village. Those whom we

THE MADONNA.

left after us there as children, are grown men, the men are grown old, and the old have been long since in their graves. The sapling supplants the tree. Every thing in this world passes away, and men much faster than trees. We have no permanent residence here—we ought to fix our thoughts on that which is prepared for us, and which knows no change, but stands forever.” The old man passed on, and Theodora abandoned the hope of finding the tree.

Count von Wahlheim lived several leagues off, but this very forest was part of his lately purchased property. It happened that he came one day there, to distribute wood to the poor tenants on his property, for their winter fire. As the whole place had grown to a wilderness, and was too thickly stocked with wood, he resolved to superintend the work in

THE MADONNA

person, in order that the wood might be thinned with advantage. He wished also, to see with his own eyes, that every poor person got his stipulated portion. Orders to this effect were issued to the steward, and trees were allotted to several poor families. Theodora came on behalf of her brother, for whom, according to the distribution made by the count, the tree near which the count was then standing, had been marked out. Theodora advanced and begged the count to excuse her brother's absence, as he was so ill as to be confined to bed. The thought never entered the count's head, that this poor, old, ragged woman was his mother; and as little could she suppose, that the young lord, in the full bloom of health and beauty, with the diamond ring, and other marks of rank on his person, was her lost Augustus. But though he did not know her, he

THE MADONNA

was struck with her appearance, pitied her misfortunes, and ordered her to have the tree.

The forester was unwilling to obey the order. "O," said he, "it is a pity to cut down this fine old beech; aspen and poplar are good enough for the poor. Beechwood ought to be reserved for the castle, and the tenants." Count von Wahlheim cast a stern and reproving glance at the forester. "The poor," said he, "ought not to be supplied with that alone, which we reject; they ought to have their share of the best, especially in times of need. That tree must go to the sister of the sick man; let it be sawed into blocks and planks, at my expense, and laid down at their door. Fell it this moment, before you lay an axe to the wood for my own castle."

He retired instantly, to escape the outburst of Theodora's gratitude. "May

THE MADONNA.

heaven bless that good master," said she, as she followed him with her eyes, before he disappeared.

Thus did the mother and son, who, some twenty years before, had seen each other for the last time in this forest, meet there now, and not recognise each other—and thus were they perhaps on the point of being again separated forever, if God's kind providence had not otherwise selected a sweeter and more significant means of uniting them.

Two foresters instantly plied their axes at the trunk of the tree. It came to the ground with a tremendous crash; and the men shouted aloud with amazement, "a miracle, a real miracle." The timber had split into fragments near the root, where it was rotten; a large portion of the bark was peeled off—and there, fixed in the tree, the men discovered the image which

THE MADONNA

Theodora had placed there. The colors were still fresh and brilliant, and the gilt frame gleamed in the sunbeams, reflecting a dazzling lustre on the image. The foresters were young men, and had never heard the history of the image. "This," said they to each other, "surpasses our understanding: how that beautiful image of the Mother of God could have been fixed here! There is no mark on the bark of the tree over it: that spot was covered with bark and overgrown with moss, like the other trees of the forest. No man ever heard of such a thing—it is a miracle."

Count von Wahlheim, who was not many paces distant, overheard the exclamation of the two men, and leaving the persons to whom he had been distributing wood, he came and took the image in his hand. Having examined it attentively, "Really it is beautiful," he

THE MADONNA

remarked: "it is a masterpiece. That pale sorrowful face, those tranquil eyes raised so devoutly to heaven, are exquisitely finished—and the soft texture and colors of the dark blue mantle, are true as life. It is obvious that the image must have been placed in the tree by some pious person, who cut a niche in the trunk, over which, as the tree grew, the bark closed, completely concealing the image, after the lapse of some years."

Suddenly he turned pale—his hand trembled—his whole body shook with some painful emotion: "Wonderful, indeed," he exclaimed, as he sunk on the trunk of the fallen tree. He had inspected the image closely, and discovered on the back of it the following inscription. "Here, under this tree, I saw my only son, Augustus, for the last time, on the 10th of October, in the year of our Lord.

THE MADONNA.

1632. God be with him, wherever he is—and as He consoled Mary, when she stood at the foot of the cross, may He also console an afflicted mother—Theodora Sommer.”

The thought flashed like lightning across his mind. “I am that lost child: name, year, and date, agree—my mother put that image here.”

Just at that moment his mother was passing by. Having waited for some time in the forest, to go home in company with one of her neighbors, she heard that the image had been discovered in the trunk of a tree. “Oh! sir,” said she, coming up, “that image is mine: give it to me, I implore you. Look, there’s my name on it—written thus, at my own request, by our excellent pastor. The other words were also written by him.”

“Alas!” said she, bursting into tears,

THE MADONNA.

as she gazed on the fallen tree, "is his, then, that beech under which I saw my beloved Augustus sleeping so soft and sweetly, before he was snatched away from me. Many a time I passed by it, since my return from my flight, and yet I could not recognise it. The trunk had grown so thick—O my son, once more I behold that spot where I saw you last—but never—never more can I see you in this world. I feel as if I were standing over your grave." The tears choked her utterance—and she could say no more.

Count von Wahlheim, who had been so much affected a few moments ago, on reading his mother's name on the picture, was now almost completely overpowered on beholding her. His heart burned within him; and he could have sprung forward and locked her in his arms. But he restrained himself—he knew that the sud-

THE MADONNA.

den shock might kill his beloved mother. He took her hand affectionately, dried her tears with his own handkerchief—spoke some kind and consoling words—and, by degrees, gave her to understand that her son was still living; that he knew him well—and that, no doubt, she would soon know him. After these, and similar precautions, he said the word at length: “I am your lost son.” “You!” was the only answer of the poor mother, as she sunk upon his breast—utterly unable to give other expression to her feelings. They stood for a considerable time locked in each other’s arms, while all the bystanders wept and shared in their emotions.

“Dearest mother,” said the count, at length breaking silence, “God has fulfilled for you that prayer, which you had inscribed for me on the picture. He has been with me, and poured out on me some

THE MADONNA.

of his choicest blessings. He has also fulfilled that prayer which you had written for yourself. He has consoled you as he consoled Mary. He has restored to your arms your only son, whom you had mourned as dead. On this spot we were separated, and here, on the same spot, we meet. He preserved that image in the tree, and revealed it to us at the very moment that it could enable us to recognise each other. To us, as to so many others, has He clearly proved that He knows how to do all things for the best."

"Oh! yes," said the mother, "our good God has done it. He took you away from me at a time, that, perhaps, my affection would have spoiled you by excessive indulgence. He restored you to my arms in the hour of my need, to be an angel of comfort to me, and to this whole neighborhood. All his ways are wisdom

THE MADONNA.

and love. Blessed be His name:" a prayer which was warmly echoed by all the bystanders.

Count von Wahlheim then ordered his forester to send word to Theodora's brother, that she and her son would go visit him the following day. Theodora, herself, earnestly reminded her neighbors that they must take care of her poor brother in her absence. The count's coach was ordered—he placed his mother in it, and seating himself by her side, they drove off to the castle. Fresh joys here awaited poor Theodora. She felt some shame in appearing in her old clothes before her daughter-in-law, but Antonia was too noble-minded to attach importance to trifles. She flew with open arms to Theodora, embraced her most affectionately, and expressed her unfeigned joy on finding the mother of her beloved

THE MADONNA.

husband. Theodora wept for joy—but when her two grand-children, Ferdinand and Maria, appeared, in the bloom of happy and innocent childhood, like two little angels, she was overpowered with the happy thoughts that crowded on her soul. “Great,” she exclaimed, “as were once my sorrows, my joys are now still greater. I can only weep—pray—and thank my God. O! my good God, since even on this earth, thou canst thus change sorrow into joy, what must be the case in heaven—inexpressible, indeed, must be the happiness that awaits us there.”

Next morning Count von Wahlheim ordered his coach, and visited, with his mother, her sick brother. Theodora remained with him until he had recovered, when she returned to the castle, for her son and daughter-in-law said she should live with themselves. All her brothers

THE MADONNA

and sisters were well provided for—Count von Wahlheim and his relations, being too good and sensible to be ashamed of their poor relations. They, moreover, gave a large party, to which all were invited, on the occasion of Theodora's taking up her abode in the castle. The simple and honest relations were delighted with the kindness and love manifested towards them, and many a happy tear glistened in their eyes, at this wonderful interposition of Divine Providence in their favor.

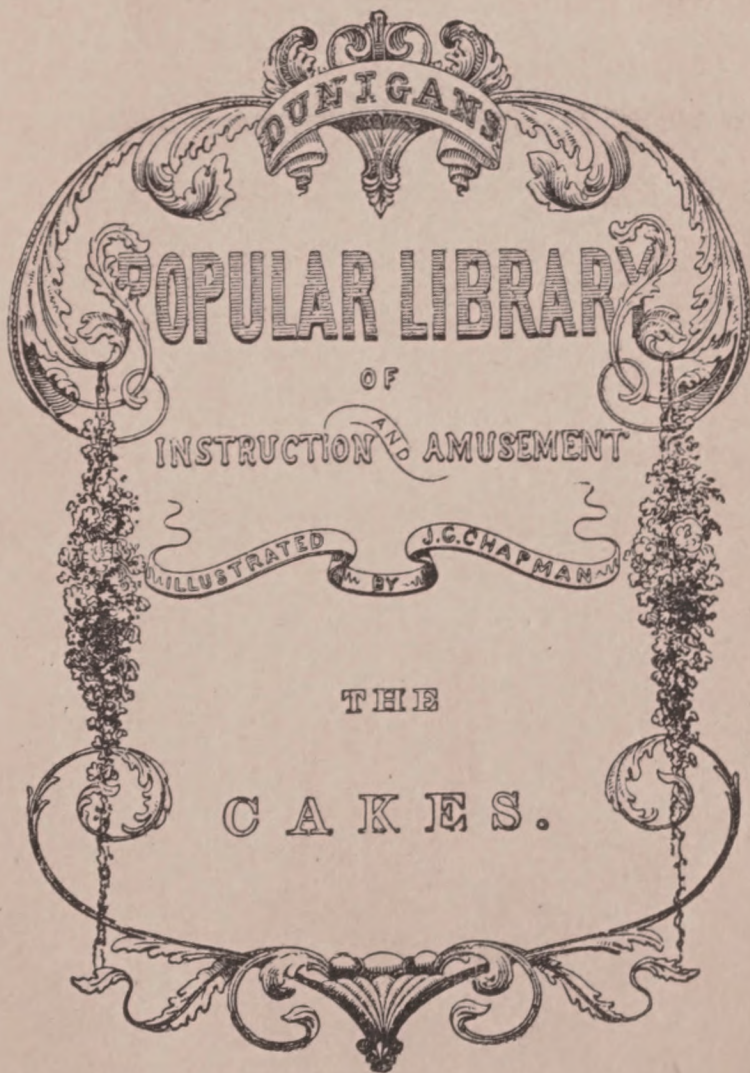
Augustus and Antonia took this opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the necessities of each of them, and then provided them liberally, but not prodigally, with that sort of help which would best suit the position of each, and enable him to advance in the world.

The little picture was placed in the

THE MADONNA.

most conspicuous part of the house. "I must always be to us," said the count, "an admonition of gratitude and confidence in God's mercy. That look of Mary's, raised so fondly to heaven, will tell us to do likewise. For among all our dangers, and the sorrows of this life, what can more powerfully sustain us in virtue, or console us in grief, than a pious raising of our eyes to heaven?"





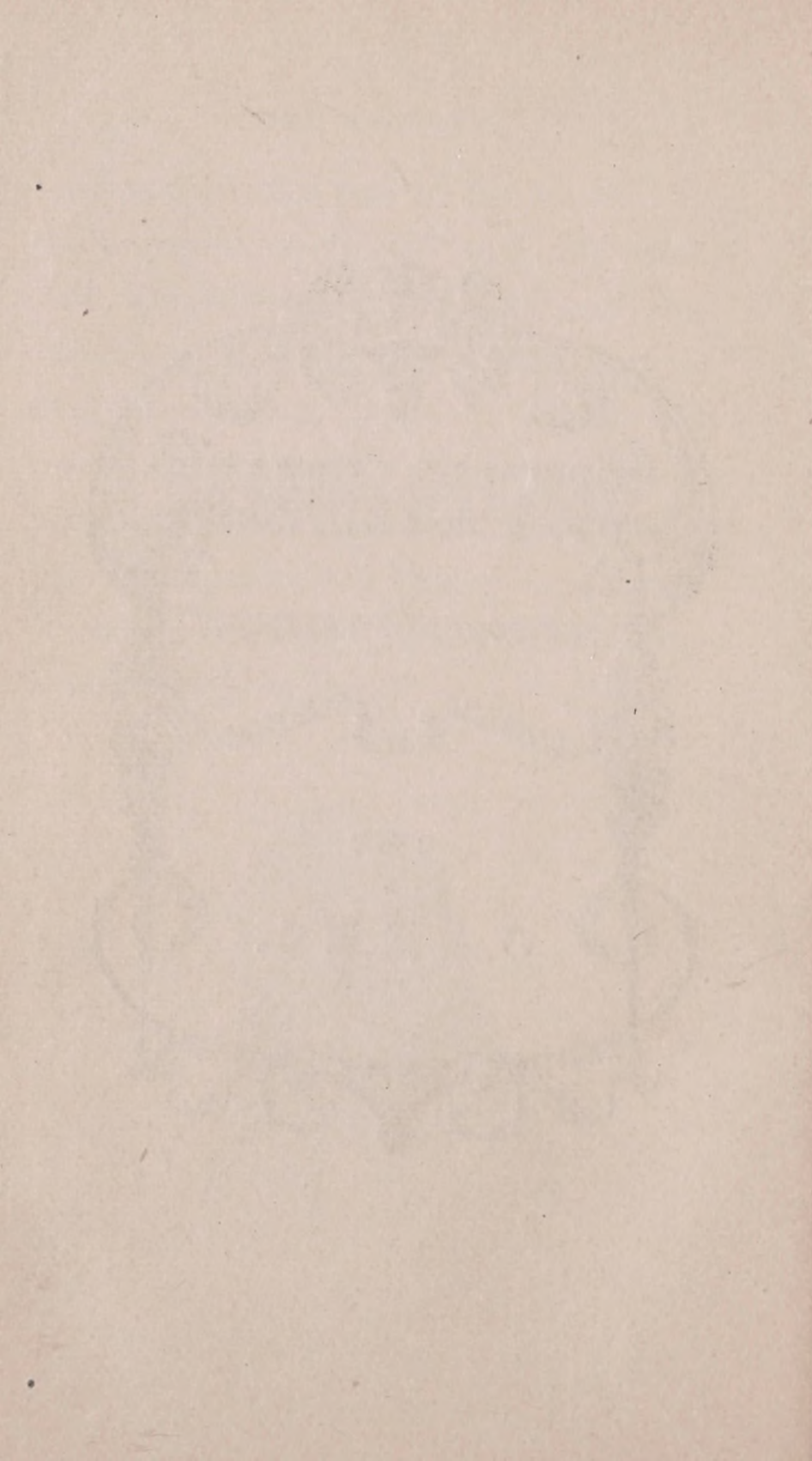
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OF
INSTRUCTION AND AMUSEMENT

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THE
CAKES.





"Fred thought he had never feasted so sumptuously."—Page 11.

THE CAKES





YOUNG FRED, a gay lively boy about ten years old, was the son of the wood-ranger at Grunenthal. His father received a letter one morning, which he was to carry from Herr von Grunenthal to Rauhenstein, a castle that lay beyond very high mountains, and in the heart of a thick forest.

“It will be a hard journey,” said the

THE CAKES.

father, "especially as the hurt I got the other day in the foot, when we were hunting, is not yet healed. From here to Rauhenstein is three good leagues. But since our good master orders it, I must obey."

But Fred offered to carry the letter. "Send me, dear father," he said. "The whole road, I know, goes through a forest, but I do not mind that. I know it well from this to our own bounds, and can easily find out the rest of it, and safely give the letter into the hands of Herr von Rauhenstein."

"Very well," said the father; "give the letter into his own hands—you know him well. There is a large sum of money in the letter; perhaps you may get something for your trouble." He then described the road for Fred, from their own bounds to Rauhenstein.

The little fellow buckled on his hunting-

THE CAKES.

pouch, and slinging his fowlingpiece over his shoulder, started on his journey.

He arrived safe at the castle, and told the servants that he had been directed to deliver the letter into the master's own hand. A servant led him up the broad stone steps, into a splendid apartment, where von Rauhenstein was engaged with a party of officers at the card-table. Fred made his best bow to the gentlemen, and delivered his letter, in which, it appeared, there were one hundred gold pieces. Herr von Rauhenstein went to his writing-desk, and wrote a few lines, acknowledging the receipt of the money. "All right," said he, sitting down in a hurry to the card-table. "You can retire now—no other answer is at present necessary—it will follow you."

With a heavy heart poor Fred returned down the broad stone stairs; for he was

THE CAKES

hungry and thirsty, and quite tired. But as he was passing through the court, he was met by the cook, who was coming out of the garden, with a large knife in one hand and cauliflowers in the other. She knew by the poor boy's face, the state of his feelings.

“Come with me, little forester,” said she, kindly, “and I will give you some bread and a drink of good beer. You might otherwise faint upon the road—you are far from home—and there is not a single house on the way. You must not take it ill of our master, that he offered you nothing to eat: he does not think of such things; yet he finds no fault when we give something to people.”

The cook led Fred into the kitchen, where the large fire was blazing on the hearth. “Lay aside your pouch and fowl-ingpiece, and sit down here,” said she,

THE CAKES.

pointing to a little table in the corner of the kitchen. She then brought him plenty of soup and meat, vegetables and bread, and a small pot of beer. Fred thought he had never been feasted so sumptuously. He was refreshed and ready for his journey; but before he started he said to the cook, one hundred times, at least, "God reward you;" and that, too, with as much reverence as if she had been the lady of the castle. He even kissed her hand, although she tried to prevent him.

Happy as a prince, Fred set out on his journey. But when he had been nearly a half hour on the road, he saw a squirrel in an open space in the forest. The little animal was quite a rarity to him, for he had scarcely ever seen one in the forest of Grunenthal. Fred was very young and, perhaps, the good beer had got into his head, but, at all events, he resolved to

THE CAKES.

take the squirrel alive. He flung a piece of a rotten bough at the little animal, and started in full chase, from oak to oak, into the depths of the black forest, where he lost sight of his game, and what was much more serious, lost the road. He wandered about during the rest of the day, and half the succeeding night, through the thick forest, till, at last, sinking with hunger and fatigue, he crept beneath some low bushes, and fell into a troubled sleep. He rose in the morning, more faint than he had been before he lay down. He looked around, and advanced he knew not whither. The place was utterly unknown to him. The wild deer, starting up and bounding off in terror when they saw him, convinced him that he must be in the heart of some unfrequented wood. A herd of swine crossed his path, and among them a huge boar, which threatened him with its sharp tusches,

THE CAKES

and made the poor boy scream in agony and fly for his life. He continued to wander about until noonday, when, unable to move farther, he tottered and fell exhausted to the ground. He cried and called as loud as he could, but there was no answer except the echo of his voice in the silent forest. He could nowhere find a berry or even a drop of water to quench his hunger and thirst. He cast himself faint and despairing at the foot of a pine-tree. He earnestly prayed to God not to let him famish in the forest. Tormented by hunger, he searched in his pouch, to find, if possible, a few crumbs of the bread which he had brought with him from home, and eaten on the road to Rauhenstein. But what was his joy—his rapture, on finding a large piece of cake and some juicy pears. “Oh!” said he, “it was the cook put these here, without my knowledge.”

THE CAKES.

The poor boy shed tears of gratitude, and resolved that he would be always charitable to the needy, especially if they were strangers; and also, that if ever he were rich enough, he certainly would not forget that kindness of the good cook. "Under God," said he, "it was she that saved my life. If she had not given me the cake and pears, I should have perished here in the wild forest."

Fred rose, refreshed and strengthened, and proceeded onward again with renewed courage. He walked on in the direction of Grunenthal, as well as he could judge by the position of the sun, and after having advanced for about a league, he heard the cheering sounds of the woodman's axe in the distance. Hurrying on in the direction of the sounds, he found two men cutting down a large pine-tree. They pointed out the road to Grunenthal, where he

THE CAKES.

arrived safely to the great joy of his parents, who had been dreadfully alarmed on his account.

His father reproved him severely, and gave him good advice. "Thus it is," said he, among other things, "when men allow themselves to be drawn away from the right road to follow their pleasures. You might have perished in that wild wood far from your father's house, without the poor consolation even of catching that squirrel. Our way through life is like a road through a wild forest, where many a pleasure, like that alluring little animal, seeks to entice us from the path of virtue. As I, dear Fred, faithfully described to you the right road through the forest, so God points out to us in his commandments the true path for our pilgrimage through this world. Let no earthly pleasure ever seduce you to the right or the left from the way of virtue

THE CAKES.

One false step might ruin you forever, and prevent you from entering your true Father's house beyond the grave.

“The love of pleasure,” he continued, “perverts the heart of man, and makes him insensible to noble and generous feelings. Herr von Rauhenstein, with whom you are so much displeased, is far from being a bad man. But he was so much taken up with his play, that he never thought either of giving you some refreshment, though you stood so much in need of it, or some money, though the hundredth part of what he had staked that morning, would have sent you home as happy as a prince. But guard yourself against that, which displeases you so much in another, let your pleasure or your own will never engage you, so as to make you insensible to the wants and happiness of others. Imitate whatever you find good in others; be

THE CAKES.

ever as kind and generous to all men, as Rosalie, the cook, was to you in the castle of Rauhenstein."

Fred grew up a good forester, faithful and true to his employer, open and generous to all, and without one stain on his good name. But he was particularly remarkable for his kindness and charity to travellers and the poor. He never forgot Rosalie's kindness. He went to the castle, once, to tell her how much she had done for him, but she had left the service, and no person could give him any account of her. From that day forward he never got any intelligence of his kind benefactress.

In the course of some years, Fred was promoted for his integrity and skill to the office of chief huntsman under the king's woodranger, and afterwards was made forester of Tannek, one of the most lucrative posts in the gift of his master

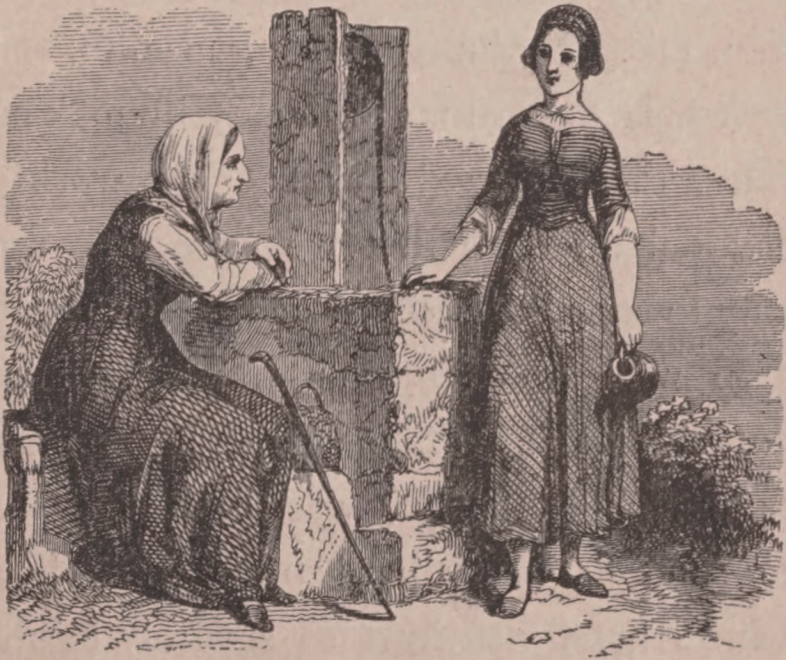
THE CAKES.

After his marriage, he often told his wife, who was as benevolent as himself, of many adventures of his boyish days, and, especially, how he had been saved from certain death in the forest, by the kindness of Rosalie. They resolved that since they could not find her, they would prove their sense of her goodness, by as liberal charity to travellers and the poor, as their means allowed. They had a good opportunity of indulging their charitable dispositions, as the forester's lodge, in which they lived, lay on the border of the forest near the high road.

Fred's wife went one very sultry afternoon to bring a glass of water from the well. There she found a poor woman sitting on the bench which her husband had made under the shady pines, near the well, for the accommodation of travellers. The strange woman, though clean and

THE CAKES.

neatly dressed, was evidently poor, and appeared very tired and unhappy. A wicker basket and her walking-stick lay near her on the bench. Struck by the mild and wo-begone expression of her



countenance, Fred's wife saluted her cordially, and invited her to the lodge to take some refreshment. The stranger gratefully accepted the kind offer, and entered the house. Fred's wife served up a rem-

THE CAKES.

nant of roast venison, and poured out for her a glass of beer. The two soon became so sociable that the stranger told the whole history of what was weighing so heavily on her heart.

“I live,” said she, “about twelve leagues from this. My husband is a gunsmith, and was able to earn much money by making rifles, muskets, and pistols. He worked day and night, so that we were able not only to support ourselves and the two children with whom heaven has blessed us, but also to lay aside something for the future. But latterly it was the will of God to send us many hard trials. My husband’s hand was hurt so severely by the bursting of a new musket which he was trying, that he has not been able to work during the last year. The war which ravaged our neighborhood had a ready stripped us of the greater part of our

THE CAKES.

property. The doctor's bill still continued a heavy drain, and as we had no money coming in, we were badly able to meet it—but, to crown all our misfortunes, we lost our only cow by the murrain. We had already raised money on the credit of our lands and house, and had no means left of replacing our cow, as the neighbors would not lend the money. Without a cow we could not live: so I resolved to undertake a long journey to my brother, hoping that he would give the money. I did make that long journey, and I am now on my way home. I told him my hard case, and begged his help. Twenty or thirty crowns would have bought a cow for me. My brother was willing enough to help me, but his wife would not allow him to give me a penny. She was displeased with me, she said, because I had married a man who had no property. All

THE CAKES.

I got was a small sum, that my brother slipped secretly into my hand, but it will hardly cover half the expenses of my journey. But it was all the pocket-money he had then at his disposal. Alas!" she sighed, wiping the tears from her eyes, "I pity my brother, and still more, my poor husband and children. They are anxiously praying for my return, and expecting some help: what a grief it will be to them, when I meet them with empty hands!"

At this moment the forester returned home, with his bag well stocked with game. He saluted the poor stranger kindly. His wife told him how she had invited her to come in, and what a melancholy tale had just been told.

"Right, right, Dora," said Fred, "it makes my heart glad, to see you acting as I would, consoling the poor stranger and giving her a share of what God has

THE CAKES.

given to us. Generosity, especially to strangers and travellers, is a most sacred duty.

“And good reason I have to say so,” said he, taking a chair and sitting down near the woman, while his wife placed a glass of ale on the table before him. He then told his boyish adventure in the forest, and how he had been saved from starvation, by the kindness of Rosalie, the good cook of Rauhenstein.

“Good God!” exclaimed Rosalie, clasping her hands, “I am that cook. Rosalie is my name. Frederic is yours—and your father was forester of Grunenthal. I can tell you some particulars you omitted in your story. The food that I set before you consisted of soup, green peas and carrots, with smoked beef—and the beer-glass had a pewter cover, with a stag stamped on it, which particularly struck your fancy

THE CAKES.

You were very much displeased with Herr von Rauhenstein, and remarked that he was true to his name, but I told you he was a better man than he appeared to be. When you left me, you kissed my hand, out of gratitude, but against my will. Words cannot tell how happy I am, that the bit of cake saved your life, and that I see you now so happy and independent. Wonderful are the ways of God—I should never have recognised you. The slender, little forester is now grown an able and fine-looking man, and God, as I see, has blessed you in all things.”

The forester now expressed his joy on meeting his old friend, and bade her a thousand welcomes. “I thought I knew you,” said he, “when I met you first, but I could not distinctly remember who you were or where I had seen you. The thought struck me, that you might be

THE CAKES.

my friend Rosalie, though time had made some change in you. To be sure of the fact, I told you my adventure in the forest. God be praised! I have found you at last. I am the happiest man under the sun.—You must not stir this day.—Come, Dora, —the best in your kitchen and cellar for our friend.”

Rosalie pressed hard to be allowed to depart. “By to-morrow evening I must be at home,” said she. “Now that the heat of the day is over, I will walk a few leagues farther—the twelve leagues would be too long a journey for to-morrow.”

“That matter can be easily managed,” said Fred. “To-morrow morning I will harness the pony to my light wagon, and drive you as far as I can. I would drive you to your own door, if I were not obliged to attend the prince with the

THE CAKES

hunting-party that are on a visit with him."

Fred's wife was as happy as himself, on finding Rosalie. There was no resisting their united entreaties. She consented to stop that night. The hostess prepared a supper in her best style, and at the end of the meal produced a large cake, prepared in the same way as that which Rosalie had given to Fred. It was wreathed with garlands of the most beautiful flowers, and in the centre, the words "To gratitude," were formed with white sugar, in imitation of pearls.

"Oh!" said Rosalie, "don't cut that beautiful cake. I have dined so heartily I will not touch it."

"Very well," said the hostess, "but then you must put the cake in your basket, and carry it home in the morning to your children."

THE CAKES.

Fred had ordered his best wine from the cellar ; and he and his wife drank to the health and happiness of Rosalie and her family, and Rosalie must pledge them. "For had it not been for you," said the forester, "we should not now be sitting here, and this house, in which I and my Dorothy live so happily together, would have other tenants."

Next morning, at break of day, Fred was busy preparing to escort his old friend to her family. His wife had a good breakfast on the table ; and when all was ready, she put the large cake into Rosalie's basket, together with other provisions for the road, and some few presents for the children. Fred accompanied Rosalie half the journey. When he took leave of her, he promised to visit her as soon as possible, and to get his fire-arms repaired by her husband, — a promise which he faithfully performed

THE CAKES.

Rosalie continued her journey in good spirits. When she approached her house, she saw her two children, William and Theresa, advancing on the road to meet her. When they saw her, they sprung forward with joyful cries, and asked what she had in the basket. "Oh, wait until we reach home," said she, "you must not be so impatient and curious."

Her husband met her at the door, and all entered together. Rosalie told the harsh reception she had got from her sister-in-law, and also announced the sad news, that she brought home no money. Her husband was sadly disappointed; nor could all she said of the happy night she spent with the forester, dispel his gloom. Rosalie opened her basket, and produced the cake. The sight of it made the children forget all their sorrows; but when the father saw

THE CAKES.

them clapping their hands, and loudly expressing their joy, he could scarcely repress his tears.

“What good is the cake,” said he; “where are we to get twenty or thirty guilders, to buy a cow?”

But lo—when the mother tried to cut the cake for the children, the knife stuck so fast in it, that all her strength could not divide it.

“This is a singular cake,” said she; “it must have been baked too much.” She broke the crust—and the first thing that met her eye, were two thalers of gold—and below them, in order, a dozen others.

Fred’s joy on finding the cake in his pouch, was not greater than hers, when she saw the glittering coin. “Gracious heaven!” said she, “Frederic told his wife to put them in the cake, to enable

THE CAKES.

us to buy a cow, and to raise us from poverty."

"The gold is worth thirty-two guilders and some crowns," said little William, who was learning his table of coin in school; "it will buy a fine cow for us."

"And then we can have milk and butter again," said Theresa, hopping about and clapping her hands.

But the father took off his cap, and thanked God with tears, and the mother and children joined in his prayer. "That piece of cake which you gave, many years ago, to the little boy," said he, "was capital well laid out; we receive it back now a hundred, nay, a thousand fold."

"Yes," said the mother, "and the smallest act of kindness, to one of our

THE CAKES.

brethren, will be much more amply rewarded in heaven.”

“Oh, my dear children,” added the father, “let us be always merciful, that we may obtain mercy.”



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